

Chairman's Summary
Burundi Country-Specific Meeting
Peacebuilding Commission
13 October 2006

Upon requests by the Government of Burundi and the Security Council, the Organizational Committee on 23 June 2006 selected Burundi to be one of the first countries to be considered by the Peacebuilding Commission.

The country-specific meeting benefited from comprehensive presentations made by the Government of Burundi, which outlined both its broad development strategies and the critical challenges to consolidating peace. The participants noted that these strategic frameworks were developed through participatory processes. The Government Emergency Programme, the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, the UN Common Action Plan and the UN Development Assistance Framework provide a comprehensive framework that reflects the extensive needs in Burundi's post-conflict reconstruction.

Participants noted with satisfaction the progress made in the consolidation of peace with the establishment of an inclusive government, citing the adoption of a new constitution, the holding of free and fair elections, and more recently, the signing of a Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government and FNL. The participants also expressed deep appreciation for the role played by the Regional Peace Initiative, comprised of Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa and others, with support from the African Union, the UN, and the international community that resulted in the Arusha Agreement signed by 19 negotiating parties in August 2000, as well as subsequent ceasefire agreements.

Participants acknowledged that Burundi is still in an early post-conflict phase and that its development and reconstruction challenges are immense in all areas. They also emphasized the need for an intensive and sustained process of capacity building to enable the state to perform its functions. They agreed with the Government's view of the critical challenges that impede the consolidation of peace, which will need to be addressed urgently to help lay the foundations for sustainable peace and create the enabling environment for development and reconstruction. These critical challenges are summarized as follows:

Promoting Good Governance. As identified by the Government, the history of poor governance in the country is one of the primary root causes of the conflict. This priority area includes: strengthening governance institutions; participation; reforming the civil service, strengthening administrative capacities; improving planning at both central and local levels; creating an institutional and regulatory environment to ensure transparency and to fight against corruption; strengthening capacities at both the macroeconomic and sectoral levels; increasing donor support to the Government's budget, strengthening civil society.

Strengthening the Rule of Law and the Security Sector. All participants agreed on the centrality and importance of national efforts to strengthen the rule of law in consolidating

peace. This priority area includes: strengthening the justice system to ensure the fair administration of justice, combat impunity, ensure the independence of the judiciary, modernize correction services, create an independent national human rights commission and ombudsman's office, revise national legislation to ensure its compliance with international human rights standards, and establish a truth and reconciliation commission and a special court. Completing DDR, with a particular emphasis on effective reintegration programmes to ensure former combatants are fully integrated into social and economic life is a priority task; as is reforming the security sector to ensure that it is appropriately sized and effectively managed, under civilian control, and respectful of human rights;

Ensuring Community Recovery. As suggested by the Government, participants agreed that improving the livelihoods of Burundians, in an equitable manner, as part of a broader effort to re-launch the economy, must be addressed if peace is to succeed. In addition attention is needed on the problems of youth unemployment, street children, land issues, inequalities with regard to access to resources, particularly for women, assisting communities in ensuring the effective social and economic reintegration of returning refugees, displaced persons and ex-combatants are all issues that need to be addressed to strengthen a durable peace. The challenges facing women and girls require concerted attention. Participants noted the need for further support to the National Land Commission.

Participants noted with appreciation the Government's emphasis on dialogue with political parties, civil society including women's groups, the private sector, and media on the development of national strategies for the consolidation of peace. They requested the Government to present updates on the ongoing process of dialogue at the next country specific meeting, and urged the United Nations and international community to support these efforts.

Participants appreciated the efforts by the Government in implementing the principles contained in UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on Women, Peace and Security, and encourages all actors to continue working towards this aim.

Participants called for support to national efforts to coordinate external resources and to ensure that donor assistance is in line with national priorities. The integration of external resources within a national development framework and budget will contribute to building public trust and credibility in national institutions. Consequently, participants urged the donor community to sustain and increase its support to Burundi and to consider support to the Government's budget to avoid the potentially destabilizing effect of non-payment of salaries. An important benchmark will be the forthcoming donor-conference following the endorsement of the PRSP by the World Bank and the IMF.

The participants also called upon the countries of the Regional Peace Initiative for Burundi and South African facilitation to sustain their political support for the consolidation of peace.

Burundi was declared eligible to benefit from the Peacebuilding Fund, and was invited to initiate consultations with the UN presence in the country on accessing these funds as described in the Fund's terms of reference.

Members of the Peacebuilding Commission recommend to the Government to further develop, with support from the United Nations, strategies and plans for addressing the critical peacebuilding issues identified above, based on a mapping of existing activities and the identification of gaps. The members noted that the existing national coordination mechanisms should be enhanced to take into account the work of the Peacebuilding Commission and strengthen the Government's capacity to lead coordination. The members invited the Government to report on the status of development and implementation of these strategies and plans at the next meeting of the country-specific meeting.

Members of the Peacebuilding Commission also called upon the international community to sustain its political and financial support to Burundi, and encouraged the UN, World Bank, IMF and other donors to ensure that the allocation of resources and the activities undertaken reflect the peacebuilding priorities identified above. The members called upon all the relevant actors to enhance their coordination efforts, including sequencing, to maximize resources in support of Burundi's peacebuilding priorities.

Members of the Peacebuilding Commission noted that this meeting represents the first in a series of meetings, with the second taking place before the end of the year. In between formal meetings, the members agreed to devote time to informal working meetings to work with the Government of Burundi on the areas where the Peacebuilding Commission can add value.